

What is claimed is:

1. A method of conducting product assessment and development, said method comprising:

displaying on a terminal a predetermined scale against which a respondent can indicate a rating for a first existing product;

receiving a first product rating indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent;

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said first product rating;

receiving a first different product rating for a different product indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent;

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said first different product rating; and

collecting ratings made by said respondent via said terminal.

2. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a second existing product rating indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent; and

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said second existing product rating.

3. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 2, further comprising the initial steps of receiving identifications by the respondent of the first and second existing products.

4. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 1, further comprising:

providing said respondent with additional information of said different product via said terminal;

receiving a second different product rating of said different product indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent; and

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said second different product rating,

wherein said second different product rating represents a re-rating of said different product by the respondent.

5. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 4, further comprising receiving a response from said terminal of the respondent to at least one of a plurality of questions regarding said different product indicated as a rating against a predetermined scale displayed on the terminal.

6. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 5, wherein said step of collecting ratings further comprises collecting both answers and ratings made by said respondent, calculating an overall respondent rating for said different product and displaying said rating to the respondent via the terminal.

7. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 6 wherein said step of calculating includes performing a weighted average of said answers and ratings in accordance with a predetermined formula.

8. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 7 wherein after said step of displaying said rating to the respondent, said method further comprising receiving an indication from said terminal whether the overall respondent rating should be revised.

9. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 5 wherein said visual indicators corresponding to said answers to said plurality of questions numerically illustrate the location in the scale indicated by the respondent.

10. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 6 wherein said overall respondent rating for said different product is displayed to the respondent in a format indicating a numeric score and a corresponding textual description.

11. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 1 wherein said steps of indicating ratings along said scale comprise performing an action with a user input device electrically connected to said terminal.

12. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 1 wherein the display of said scale includes demarcations along said scale defining a plurality of subjective ratings.

13. A method of conducting assessment and development of a product using information from a plurality of respondents, said method comprising:

collecting answers and ratings made by a plurality of respondents using the method of claim 1;

generating a product assessment report for said product.

14. A product assessment report generated by the method of claim 13.

15. A method of conducting product assessment and development according to claim 1, further comprising:

displaying an advertisement a predetermined number of times on said terminal;

receiving a second different product rating of said different product indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent; and

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said second different product rating,

wherein said second different product rating represents a re-rating of said different product by the respondent.

16. A method of conducting product assessment and development, said method comprising:

allowing a respondent to rate a first existing product by indicating a first existing product rating along a predetermined scale displayed on a terminal and displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said first existing product rating;

allowing said respondent to rate a different product by indicating a first different product rating along said scale and displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said first different product rating; and
collecting ratings made by said respondent via said terminal.

17. A program product for conducting product assessment and development, said program product comprising machine-readable program code for causing, when executed, one or more machines to perform the following method steps:

displaying on a terminal a predetermined scale against which a respondent can indicate a rating for a first existing product;

receiving a first existing product rating indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent;

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said first existing product rating;

receiving a first different product rating for a different product indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent;

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said first different product rating; and

collecting ratings made by said respondent via said terminal.

18. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 17, further comprising:

receiving a second existing product rating indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent; and

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said second existing product rating.

19. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 17, further comprising the initial steps of receiving identifications by the respondent of the first and second existing products.

20. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 18, further comprising:

providing said respondent with additional information of said different product via said terminal;

receiving a second different product rating of said different product indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent; and

displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said second different product rating,

wherein said second different product rating represents a re-rating of said different product by the respondent.

21. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 20, further comprising receiving a response from said terminal of the respondent to at least one of a plurality of questions regarding said different product indicated as a rating against a predetermined scale displayed on the terminal.

22. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 21 wherein said step of collecting ratings further comprises collecting both answers and ratings made by said respondent, calculating an overall respondent rating for said different product and displaying said rating to the respondent via the terminal.

23. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 22 wherein said step of calculating includes performing a weighted average of said answers and ratings in accordance with a predetermined formula.

24. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 23 wherein after said step of displaying said rating to the respondent, said method further comprising receiving an indication from said terminal whether the overall respondent rating should be revised.

25. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 21 wherein said visual indicators corresponding to said answers to said plurality of questions numerically illustrate the location in the scale indicated by the respondent.

26. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 22 wherein said overall respondent rating for said different product is displayed to the respondent in a format indicating a numeric score and a corresponding textual description.

27. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 17 wherein said steps of indicating ratings along said scale comprise performing an action with a user input device electrically connected to said terminal.

28. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 17 wherein the display of said scale includes demarcations along said scale defining a plurality of subjective ratings.

29. A program product for conducting product assessment and development according to claim 17, further comprising:

displaying an advertisement a predetermined number of times on said terminal;
receiving a second different product rating of said different product indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent; and
displaying a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said second different product rating,

wherein said second different product rating represents a re-rating of said different product by the respondent.

30. A system for conducting product assessment and development, said system including a server communicatively coupled to a network to which at least one terminal is coupled, said server being configured to:

display on a terminal a predetermined scale against which a respondent can indicate a rating for a first existing product;
receive a first existing product rating indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent;
display a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said first existing product rating;

receive a first different product rating for a different product indicated against said scale from the terminal of the respondent;

display a visual indicator along said scale corresponding to said first different product rating; and

collect ratings made by said respondent via said terminal.

31. A method for product assessment and development comprising:
soliciting targeted respondents to assess a product;
eliciting data from the respondents, including data indicative of the respondents' preferences;

eliciting ratings of product characteristics against a continuous metric scale using the data elicited from the respondents;

assigning values for the ratings elicited from the respondents;
processing the values to score the product.

32. A method for product assessment and development according to claim 31, further comprising displaying to the respondents the ratings of the product characteristics and requesting the respondents to validate the ratings.

33. A method for product assessment and development according to claim 31, further comprising displaying to the respondents the score of the product and requesting the respondents to validate the score.

34. A method for product assessment and development according to claim 33, further comprising prompting the respondents to comment on the score or the ratings.

35. A method for product assessment and development according to claim 31, further comprising automatically generating a report of scores compiled from respondents.

36. A method for product assessment and development according to claim 31, wherein eliciting ratings includes eliciting ratings of a set of characteristics in relation to a first product, the method further comprises describing a second product to the respondents

and eliciting ratings from the respondents of the same set of characteristics in relation to a second product, and processing includes scoring the second product.